

#MOTHER & CHILD WELFARE

Children's Day-care: MOTHERS MOVING FORWARD

Mothers tend to their children 24/7 and working mothers are challenged with doing so while balancing their work-life. Many of these ambitious working women end up sacrificing their careers and are held back by their duty to their brood.

Parents have a strong say in making decisions for their children. Starting from their children's meals to applying first aid, the parents are always kept in the loop and confirmed with before any action.

The children are put into a routine, engaging them in fun activities. The Little Ducklings provides a play zone with unique toys allowing the children to interact amongst themselves. The teachers also assist the older children in finishing any schoolwork they might have.

Samiya Tasmeen, the programme manager of The Little Ducklings says, "Children can socially interact with other children here."

Mitali Mallick is confident that her children are exposed to a better environment at Pushpita, which

for each child within their preschool and other fun activities focusing on language and communication, cognitive, social and emotional intelligence.

WeeLearn, founded by Canadian Early Childhood Education expert Jamila Haq and philanthropist Shaheen Ara Azam, stands for making children self-dependent and focuses on maintaining an age appropriate development curriculum. Haq says, "We provide activities for cognitive and fine motor development and for acquiring daily life skills, highly encouraging independence among children."

Mental health and parent-child relationship being emphasised, these day-cares provide some counselling and therapy as well. In CCD, parents are counselled on their children's problems and, if necessary,

service organisation, Iftikhar Ul Karim, chairman of CCD, illustrates the lack of proper regulations and procedures to obtain a day-care license.

"There is still no centralised regulatory body for child services. Institutionalised day-cares are mandatory, but there is no policy specifically stating how these day-cares ought to be run," he elaborates.

His concerns are shared by WeeLearn's founders. Jamila Haq states, "I noticed a lack of day-care childcare services in Dhaka for our working mothers when I visited in 2009. I decided to help my people with a Canadian curriculum-home based day-care with trained staff of international level beginning our 10-year journey of serving our private and corporate clients, along with our army and

To combat this particular issue, institutionalised day-care centres and preschools around Dhaka are trying their best to provide working mothers with reliable and safe places for their children during work hours, along with providing the children with fun activities and basic early foundation.

A primary concern for leaving children in day-cares is their safety. To earn the parents' trust, day-cares like The Little Ducklings, Care For Child Development (CCD) and WeeLearn provide live CCTV footage access to the parents at any given time, weekly reports, and arrange regular parents' meetings.

Pushpita, a day-care for private commercial banks in Motijheel, chaired by Mirza Elias Uddin Ahmed and coordinated by Raquiba Khan, open to their employees' children, has earned a trustworthy reputation.

One of the mothers taking the services of Pushpita, Mitali Mallick, who works at Pubali Bank, has no fear in leaving her 6-year-old and 2-year-old in the hands of the nannies and teachers. She appreciates this day-care due to its good monitoring.

"My children have been here almost three years and I never worry. I have access to the CCTV footage; however, I barely look through it. I know I will be informed if anything goes wrong," she says, smiling.



contributes to their socialisation and overall development.

"I wouldn't be able to give my children what they get here. They get to play and talk to children their own age, learn and experience their culture. At home, they would probably be consumed by their devices," she explains.

Most of these day-cares come with a preschool. Pushpita caters to teaching basic writing and language skills, while The Little Ducklings has an objective of educare at its heart. Their state-of-the-art preschool is open to the children of their day-care as well as outsiders. CCD provides an individual education plan

advised on positive parenting methods and other aspects to better their child's development.

WeeLearn has a child psychologist, Anuja Begum from Bangladesh Protibondhi Foundation, for quarterly visits for child counselling.

All of the centres follow the safety protocols and WHO guidelines in ensuring the wellbeing of the children and provide some form of counselling. Starting from extra set of clothes for wearing indoors for both the children and employees, to wearing masks and routinely sanitising the centre, no safety stone is left unturned.

In terms of running a child welfare

air force day-care centres."

With a lack of proper guidelines as to how these day-cares ought to be run, these centres resort to international guidelines while making changes and adapting to our society. These day-cares are essential for a child's overall growth and for women to pursue their careers and establish themselves financially. At the end of the day, these women and mothers will stand as the modern-day inspirational figures in paving a path of independence and success for women in every household.

By Puja Sarkar
Photo: Pushpita